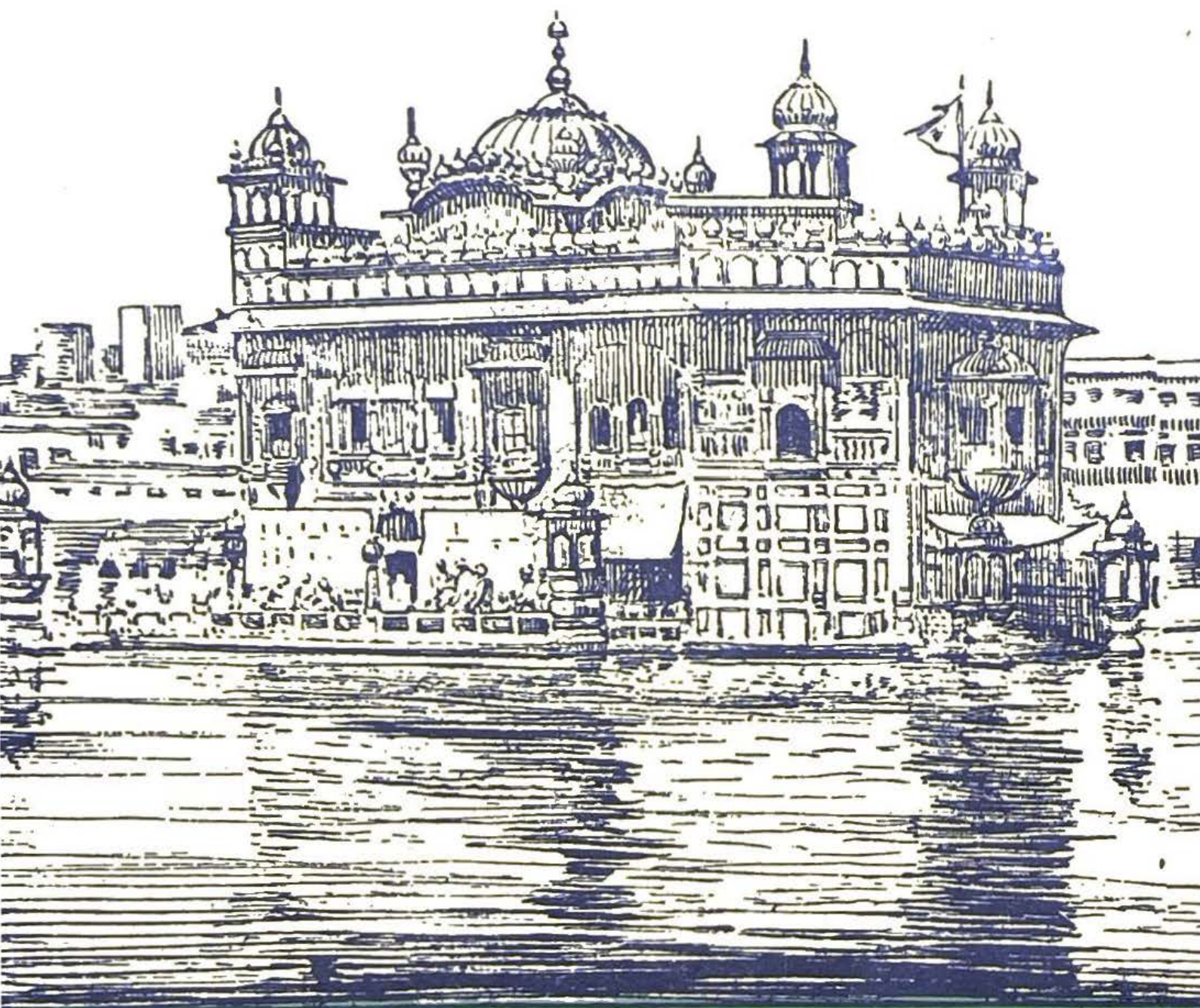


STORIES
from
SIKH HISTORY

BOOK-III



Hemkunt Press

STORIES FROM SIKH HISTORY

Book III

(Guru Har Gobind to Guru Tegh Bahadur)

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TO THE READER

In this book, third of the series, you will find stories about Guru Har Gobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan, and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Read them with your hearts filled with faith and a sincere desire to learn. We hope that you will like them and derive inspiration as well as useful instruction from them.

A few words have to be said about this revised edition of the book. The account of Guru Tegh Bahadur's tours and martyrdom being given here is different in some respects from that given in the original edition. The change was necessary because new facts have since come to light about these events. The account given in the original edition was based on the generally accepted popular version. But the great and indefatigable research scholar, Dr. Ganda Singh, has dug out fresh information from many original and most reliable sources which has to be accepted as correct; and, consequently, the generally accepted popular version has to be modified a good deal. He has set down his findings in an article entitled **The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur** published in the February 1976 issue of the **Journal of Sikh Studies**. We have drawn upon that article and re-written the account of the Guru's tours and martyrdom. We express our thanks to the great research scholar and also to the editor of the said journal.

The Authors

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The snake charmer let loose a cobra in the child's room.

I PRITHIA'S EVIL DEEDS

For long, no son had been born to Guru Arjan. His eldest brother, Prithia, and Prithia's wife, Karmo, were glad. They had a son named Meharban. They thought that after Guru Arjan their son would be the Guru. It was a pleasing thought for them. But then, by God's grace, a son was born to Guru Arjan Dev. He was named Sri Har Gobind. This event destroyed all their hopes. They were filled with grief. Their hearts began to burn.

Prithia was mean, evil and most selfish. His wife was even worse than he. She urged him to do something. He said to her, 'Don't lose heart. Our son shall be the Guru after Arjan. What if a son has been born to him? I will not allow the child to live.'

They put their heads together. 'What should be done,' said they to each other, 'to get rid of the hated child?'

Karmo made a plan. She sent for an old nurse. The nurse was known to the Guru's family. Karmo said to her, 'Go to the Guru's house. Pretend to be a friend of his family. Try to poison

his newly-born son. If you succeed, you will get as much money as you please. At present, take this sum of a hundred rupees.

The nurse agreed. She went home. She applied poison to the nipples of her breast. She went to the Guru's house. She congratulated Mata Ganga. She said many sweet and pleasing things about the child. She did so in order to please his mother, Mata Ganga. The latter told her that the child was not well. He did not accept milk. The nurse said, 'Bring him to me. I know how to cure such children. I shall make him take milk from my breast. I have a son of his age at home.'

She took Sri Har Gobind in her lap. She swayed him in her arms. She spoke soft, sweet words to him. Then she drew out her breast. She offered it to him. 'Suck, my dear, suck,' said she. She tried to put the nipple of her breast into his mouth. But he kept his mouth tightly shut.

By then the poison on the nipples of her breast had entered her blood. She was herself poisoned. She fainted, fell back and died. Who can kill him whom God decides to save ?

The Guru thanked God for having saved his son. He composed a hymn for this purpose.

Prithia and his wife were very sad. Their plan had failed. But they did not give up their evil purpose. They began to think of other plans.

Prithia sent for a snake-charmer. That man had with him many poisonous snakes or cobras. Prithia gave him some money. He promised to give him a much larger sum later. He said to him, 'Go to the Guru's house. There, let loose a very poisonous cobra in his son's sleeping room. The cobra will bite him. He will die. I shall give you a large sum, a very large sum, as a reward.'

The snake-charmer agreed. He went to the Guru's house. He let loose a very poisonous cobra in Sri Har Gobind's sleeping room. He did it very cleverly, He did not let anybody see what he was doing. He went away. But Sri Har Gobind's attendants saw the cobra in time. They killed it at once.

The Guru again thanked God for having saved his son's life. He composed a hymn for the purpose.

Thus, Prithia's second attack also failed. He did not give up his evil purpose. He made a plan. He sent for Sri Har Gobind's Brahmī attendant. He gave him a large sum. Then he said to him, 'If you do as I tell you, I shall give you a much bigger sum. Take this poison. Mix it in some curd. Make the Guru's son take the curd. Then come to me. I shall make you rich.'

The Brahmin agreed. He went to wait upon Sri Har Gobind. He used to do so every day. He

mixed the poison in a cup of curd. He did so very cleverly. He did not let anybody see what he was doing. He took the child in his lap. He applied the cup of poisoned curd to the child's mouth. 'Take it, dear one,' he said. But Sri Har Gobind kept his mouth tightly shut. The wicked Brahmin tried again and again. But he did not succeed

The Guru took the cup from the Brahmin's hand. He offered it to the child. But the latter did not accept it. He kept his mouth tightly shut. He began to cry. The Guru suspected that there was something wrong with the curd. He put some of it before a dog. The dog ate it greedily. A little after that, the dog fell down dead.

The Brahmin saw this. He said to himself, 'The Guru has found out my wicked purpose. He might punish me.' He was filled with grief and fear. He told the whole story to the Guru and begged forgiveness. The Guru was calm. He felt no anger against the wicked Brahmin. He let him go in peace.

Soon after going home, the Brahmin had an attack of colic, or severe pain in the stomach. He died in a few minutes.

The Guru again thanked God for having saved his son. He composed a hymn for this purpose.

II

NOT SAINTS, BUT-SAINT SOLDIERS, NOW

Jahangir had come to believe that Guru Arjan Dev was a deadly danger to Islam. The Emperor was eager to force all non-Muslims to become Muslims. But the Guru's teachings were making Muslims give up Islam and become Sikhs. Jahangir thought, 'Islam has to be saved. The Guru's activities must end. He must die.'

Hence he had ordered that the Guru be killed with tortures. The Guru was tortured for four hot summer days. He was seated and boiled in boiling water. He was made to sit on red-hot iron plates, heated from below. Red-hot burning sand was poured on his head. He bore all this without a groan, a cry, or a curse. Exposed to all this hellish heat, he remained composed, cool, and calm. On the fifth day his body was thrown into the Ravi. It was too weak to stand against the river's swift current. It was washed away. He himself returned to God.

Thus did Guru Arjan lay down his life for his faith. He became a martyr. He was the first Sikh martyr. No one else in the whole wide world

has ever borne so much and so well for his faith. Hence, he has been rightly called 'The Prince among Martyrs and the Ocean of Calm'.

The news of Guru Arjan's martyrdom reached Amritsar. Guru Har Gobind was sad, but he did not give himself up to grief. He kept perfectly calm. He said, 'Let Granth Sahib be read. Baba Budha will do the reading. Let *ragis* (musicians) sing the Guru's hymns'.

The singing of hymns and the reading of the Granth Sahib lasted for ten days. Then prayers were offered and sacred food (*karah parshad*) was distributed.

After that, the ceremony of seating Guru Har Gobind on the Guru's throne was performed. Baba Budha dressed him in new clothes. He then led him to the throne.

Guru Har Gobind took his seat on it. Then Baba Budha placed before him a *seli*. He requested him to wear it as a mark of Guruship.

Now, what was a *seli* ? *Seli* was a woollen cord or string. Holy men used to wear it as a necklace. Some of them used to twist it round their heads. The first five Sikh Gurus had used the *seli* as a necklace or twisted it round their head-dress.

When Baba Budha placed the *seli* before Guru Har Gobind, the latter said, 'The times have changed. The *seli* will not do now. It suits such



The times have changed. The seli will not do now.

saints or holy men as want to worship God in peace. But there is no peace for us now. Our enemies are bent upon finishing us. They are determined to root out our religion. We have to defend ourselves. We have to defend our faith. From now on, the Sikhs should be not only saints, but soldiers also. They should be saint-soldiers. They should worship God not only in huts and temples, but also in the fields of battle. Your Gurus have to lead and guide you. Hence, from now on, not the *seli* but the sword will be the mark of Guruship. The Guru has to lead and guide you in times of peace, as well as in times of war. He has to be your leader in religious as well as in worldly matters. As a mark of this two-fold duty, I shall wear two swords. That on the right side will be the sword of *piri*—the mark of my being your leader and guide in religious matters. The one on the left will be the sword of *miri*, the mark of my being your leader and guide in worldly matters. That was why my father got me trained as a soldier, too. Let my Sikhs learn riding and use of all arms. Horses and arms should be their offerings to the Guru.

Baba Budha did as desired. Guru Har Gobind put on the two swords of *miri* and *piri*. He came to be called *Miri Piri Da Malik* or the Sikhs' guide in worldly as well as in religious affairs. The *seli* was placed in the treasury.

III

JAHANGIR FEELS GRATEFUL

Guru Har Gobind began to prepare an army of saint-soldiers. In his opinion, this was necessary for the defence of his Sikhs and his faith. He would not attack anybody. But if some one made war on him, he must be able to defend himself. In order to avoid war, he wanted to be ready for war.

Hundreds of Sikh youths came to him from all parts of the Panjab. They were eager to join the Guru's army. They said to him. 'We offer you our lives. We have nothing else to offer. We require no pay. We require your favour and the gift of God's Name.' The Guru gave to each a horse and weapons of war. He enlisted them in his army of saint-soldiers.

Chandu and other enemies of the Guru saw these warlike preparations to the Guru. They were filled with fear. They thought, 'The Guru might gain power in the Panjab. He might then turn his attention to us. He might punish us. We must take some timely action.'

They put their heads together. They decided to poison Jahangir's ears against the Guru. They met the Emperor. They said to him, 'Guru Arjan was killed by your orders. His son is now the

Guru. He is making warlike preparations. He keeps a strong army. He wants to take revenge for his father's death. He will soon grow too powerful. The evil must be nipped in the bud. His father was, no doubt, a danger to Islam. You did right in getting rid of him. Har Gobind is doubly dangerous. In the first place, he is a danger to Islam. Like his father, he is converting Muslims to his faith. Muslims are afraid of him. Secondly, he is preparing to fight against you. Thus, he is a danger to your kingdom, too. He aims at becoming a king himself. He already calls himself 'the true king.' He lives like a king. He cares for nobody.'

On hearing such reports, Jahangir decided to meet the Guru. He invited him to visit him in Delhi. His men came to Amritsar. They said to him, 'The Emperor is eager to see you. He wants to make friends with you.'

The Guru discussed the matter with his mother and principal Sikhs. It was decided that the Emperor's invitation should be accepted. So, the Guru set out for Delhi. On reaching the Jamuna river, he put up his camp at Majnu's hillock.

The Emperor received the Guru with great honour. He discussed a number of religious matters with him. The Guru made his point clear by reciting the Guru's hymns. The Emperor was satisfied that the Guru's rules and principles were worthy of praise. He admired the Guru for his great and noble qualities.

The Emperor and the Guru met almost every day. One day, the Emperor said to the Guru, 'I learn that you are fond of hunting. I am going out for a hunt. Will you go with me?' The Guru agreed. They went out. In the forest, a terrible tiger came out of a bush, suddenly. He rushed at the Emperor. His men got filled with fear. They shot bullets and arrows. But they could not hit the tiger. The Emperor was in danger. He was too afraid to do anything to save himself. He called upon the Guru to save him. The Guru got down from his horse. Taking his shield and sword, he ran between the Emperor and the tiger. The tiger was about to spring upon the Guru. The Guru gave him a blow with his sword. The tiger fell lifeless to the ground. The Emperor got down from the horse. He said to the Guru, 'It was my good luck that you were with me. But for you, the tiger would have torn me to pieces. You put yourself in danger in order to save me. It was a most heroic act. I shall remember it, ever, with deep gratitude. You are a valued friend. They are all false and mean who say that you are a foe of mine. I shall never listen to them again. I shall never believe them. I shall never suspect you.'

The Guru said, 'In Guru Nanak's house there is all love and justice. My faith teaches me to be friendly with everybody. It teaches me to do good to all.'

IV

THE TRUE KING AND THE FALSE KING

Emperor Jahangir had invited Guru Har Gobind to visit him in Delhi. The Guru had accepted the invitation. He had gone to Delhi. The Emperor received him with great honour. They met each other a number of times. The Emperor asked many questions about God and religion. The Guru's replies pleased and satisfied him. He formed a very high opinion about the Guru. He began to consider the Guru to be a real saint, gifted with lofty wisdom.

After a time, the Emperor decided to go to Agra. He invited the Guru to accompany him. The Guru hesitated at first. But on receiving repeated invitations, he agreed to accompany the Emperor. They together set out for Agra.

They travelled at pleasure. They enjoyed the hunt on the way. As they were hunting, the Emperor said to the Guru, 'You occupy the seat of Guru Nanak. You should have no connection with worldly affairs. Your forefathers were not kings. You do not have any part of the land under your rule. Still, you call yourself "the true king". Your Sikhs address you as "the true king". On the other hand, my forefathers were emperors. My rule

extends over many lands. Still, your Sikhs call me a "false king". Is all this true?"

The Guru replied, 'I live and act in accordance with Guru Nanak's teachings and example. I have to look to the religious, as well as the worldly, affairs of my Sikhs. A truly religious man cannot cut or shut himself away from the world. He has to mind his worldly, as well as his religious, duties. Hence, I have to maintain a connection with worldly affairs. But I don't call myself "the true king". I am not a king. I have never told any one to call me "the true king". I love my Sikhs. My Sikhs love me. If, in their love, they call me "the true king", I cannot forbid them. Sometimes, they go even further. They call me the master of this world and the next. Their love finds expression in such phrases. It is natural.'

The Emperor was not quite satisfied. He and the Guru went off to their respective tents. The tents were in the forest lying between Delhi and Agra. The Emperor and the Guru were engaged in hunting in that forest.

It so happened that a grass-cutter was cutting grass in that forest. He was a Sikh. He had not seen the Guru till then. He heard that the Guru had come there. He made up his mind to see the Guru. He went about looking for him. He met some people. They were the Emperor's men. He said to them, 'I wish to see the true king. I am told

that he is here somewhere. Can you tell me where he is ? It will be very kind of you to do so.'

The Emperor's men considered their own Emperor to be the true king. So they said to him, 'Do you see that tall shady tree, over there ? He is sitting under that tree.' The grass-cutter thanked them for the information. He went in haste to that tree. He had with him only one *taka*, a two-pice coin. That two-pice coin was the only offering that he could make. He placed it before the Emperor. He fell at his feet. He said to him, 'O true king, all earthly kings are false. They rule over small parts of this world. Their rule lasts for only a short time. But your rule is everlasting. It extends over this world and the next. I am a poor Sikh. I seek your protection. Get all my sins pardoned. Save me from being taken to hell.'

A number of ministers and others were then with the Emperor. He said to them, 'This simple man says that I have the power to save him from hell. He says that I can get his sins pardoned. But I don't have any such power. I cannot protect even myself. How can I save him ? Evidently, he has mistaken me for the Guru. Evidently, he has not so far seen the Guru. Hence, the Guru cannot have told him to call him "the true king". The Guru was right. He has not told anybody to call him "the true king". His Sikhs have given him this name out of their love for him.'

Then he said to the grass-cutter, 'I am not the true king. I am a false king. The true king sits there, under that tree.'

The grass-cutter took up his two-pice coin. He ran with it to the Guru. He fell at his feet. He made the same request to him as he had made to the Emperor. The Guru said to him affectionately, 'Rise, brother, I tell you how to be happy in this world, as well as, in the next. Ever be sweet and humble in your behaviour. Love everybody and hate no one. Live honestly. Earn your living with honest labour. Share your earnings with the needy. Always do good to others. Don't try to get what belongs to others by right. Remember God. Regard Him as watching you every moment of your life. Live in accordance with the Guru's teachings. You will be happy here and hereafter.'

V

THE DELIVERER

Emperor Jahangir and Guru Har Gobind were together at Agra for quite a long time. During this time, the Emperor saw that the Guru was unusually strong in body and mind. He was an excellent rider. He was quick and skilful in the use of the sword. He could kill a tiger with a single stroke of his sword. His arrows never missed their mark. He was highly respected by his Sikhs. He had an army of strong, fearless, and well-trained soldiers. His soldiers obeyed him without asking any questions. They were ready to lay down their lives for him. His army was increasing, day by day.

Jahangir saw all this. He became uneasy. He thought, 'The Guru is becoming more and more powerful, day by day. Soon he might become too strong. He might set up a kingdom of his own in the Panjab. Suitable action should be taken to check him.'

He expressed his fears to his ministers. They had been bribed by Chandu. As you know, Chandu had killed Guru Arjan Dev with inhuman cruelty. The growing friendship between the Emperor and the Guru was causing him much fear. He feared

that the Guru might persuade the Emperor to punish him. He urged the Emperor's ministers to put an end to this friendship.

So, the ministers said to the Emperor, 'The Guru is really dangerous. He is making preparations against you. He will soon rebel against your rule. He should be sent away to a far-off place. Why not send him to the fort at Gwalior as a prisoner? When he is away, his Sikhs will be leaderless. His soldiers will go away to their homes. That will be the end of his army. Then there will be no further danger from him. He will become powerless and harmless.'

The Emperor accepted his minister's advice. He ordered that the Guru be imprisoned for twelve years. The fort of Gwalior was to be his prison.

The news of the Guru's imprisonment spread among his Sikhs very fast. It made them sad and agitated. Groups of them set out for Gwalior in order to see their Guru. They were not permitted to see him. They kissed the wall of the fort. They bowed in the direction of the Guru's room. Then they returned to the Panjab. This became a regular practice with the Sikhs.

At that time, fifty-two rajas' sons were kept as prisoners in the Gwalior fort. They had been deprived of their kingdoms and thrones by Jahangir. They got a very bad treatment in the fort. They



The grass-cutter and the Emperor.

were not given proper and sufficient food. They were made to wear dirty clothes. Their condition was extremely miserable.

The Guru was deeply pained, to see them. He at once, took steps to improve their condition. The Emperor had allowed ample rations for him. He desired that his rations be distributed among the needy rajas. He ate much less than they. The prisoners' life became much better. They ate good and sufficient food. They got new, clean clothes to wear. The Guru told them of God and Guru Nanak. His teachings made them forget their sorrow. They became his Sikhs.

The Guru's imprisonment agitated the Sikhs. They were getting restless and angry. Jahangir came to know about the growing agitation and restlessness among the Sikhs. He became uneasy. Many God-fearing Muslims also did not like the Emperor's action against the Guru. One of such God-fearing holy men was Hazrat Mian Mir of Lahore. He met Jahangir. He said to him, 'Guru Har Gobind is a man of God. He is dear to God. It is not good to imprison such a holy man. No good can come out of such action. He should be released.'

The Emperor accepted Mian Mir's advice. He sent orders for the Guru's release. The Guru had been in prison for over two years. The imprisoned fifty-two rajas heard that the Guru was about to be

released. This news made them sad. They feared that they would again begin to be treated in the old bad way. The Guru said to them, 'Don't fear. I shall take you all with me.'

The Guru was informed that he was free. But he said, 'I will not go alone. All these rajas must go out with me, or I shall stay here with them.' The Guru's words were conveyed to the Emperor. He said, 'I cannot release all of them. But I shall release as many of them as can come out holding the Guru's garment and hands.' On hearing this, the Guru got prepared a special garment. It had fifty tapering cloth strips attached to it all round. Fifty rajas held these strips, one each. Two of them held the Guru's hand, one each. Thus all of them came out of the fort, holding the Guru's garment and hands.

Because of this, Guru Har Gobind came to be called *Bandi Chhorr*. (The Deliverer of Prisoners)—the holy man who had freed prisoners.

VI

DRAWN BY LOVE

Once, a poor devout Sikh felt a strong, deep desire to do some service to the Guru. He said to himself, 'I would like to invite him to my humble hut, and give him something to eat.' But the very next moment he said to himself, 'Man, don't be a fool. Don't forget yourself. You are a poor man. With the whole days' hard labour you earn a small amount. That amount is just enough to provide coarse food for you and your wife. The Guru is a great person. He is the King of both worlds. He has countless rich Sikhs who can invite him to their grand houses and provide dainty food. What have you to offer? How dare you expect him to come to your poor hut, and partake of your coarse bread? So, don't let your thoughts wander that way.'

Still, the wish to invite and serve the Guru did not leave him. He could not expel it from his heart. He talked of it to his wife. At the same time, he said, 'I doubt if he will accept my invitation. What should we do?'

His wife's faith was stronger than his. She welcomed his proposal. She said, 'We need have no doubts, at all. The Guru is drawn by deep, sincere love. He is not fond of tasty dishes. He

gladly accepts even coarse food from those who love him truly and sincerely. If we prepare even coarse food with hearts full of true love, he will certainly come. He will come of his own accord.'

The following day, the Sikh worked harder and longer than usual. He earned a bit more money than he used to earn before. He went home. They decided to prepare for the Guru *missi rotis*, cakes of bread baked by using a mixture of wheat and gram flour, mixed with salt, spices, and finely cut onions.

With the money earned by him, he purchased wheat, grams, onions, and other articles needed for the purpose. His wife ground the wheat and the grams. She kneaded the wheat and the gram flour together. She salted and spiced it. She then mixed finely cut onions in the kneaded flour. Then she baked a number of *missi rotis*.

All the time that the cakes were being prepared, the couple kept repeating God's Name. They also kept reciting the Guru's hymns. The *missi rotis* were ready. They wrapped them in a piece of clean cloth. They placed them on a stool. Then they sat on the floor with folded hands. They fixed their thoughts on the Guru. They said, again and again, 'O dear, true Guru, come and take the humble, coarse food prepared by us'

Guru Har Gobind was, at that time, some miles away. He was engaged in hunting. Their prayers

reached him. He turned his horse in their direction. Riding at full speed, he arrived at their door. They were overjoyed to see him. Their prayer had been heard and answered. Their love and faith had drawn him. 'How lucky we are !' thought they. 'How kind the Guru is !' They stood up to receive him. They bowed to him. They touched his feet. They then stood with folded hands and bowed heads.

Alighting from the horse, the Guru said, 'O my dear Sikhs, I am hungry, very hungry. I would like to take *missi rotis*. Please be quick.'

You can easily guess how glad they were to hear the Guru's words. They placed the *missi rotis* before him. He ate them with evident pleasure. After taking his fill, he said, 'I have never before tasted anything so sweet and tasty. May God and Guru Nanak bless you !'

Saying this, he galloped away.

VII

PAINDE KHAN

Once, Guru Har Gobind was staying at Kartarpur, in the present district of Jullundur. Some Pathans of village Wada Mir came to him. Each of them had a sword and a shield. They requested the Guru to take them in his service as paid soldiers. He enlisted them in his army. A large number of Muhammedans were already serving in his army as paid soldiers.

Among the Pathans was a tall and powerful youth of sixteen. His name was Paine Khan. He had large eyes, strong arms, and a thick neck. The Guru was pleased with his appearance. He made him an officer in his army. He made special arrangements for Paine Khan's training as a soldier. He treated him like a son. Paine Khan grew very strong in body. He could perform wonderful feats of bodily strength. Nobody was his equal. No one could shoot arrows, or use the sword, as well as he did. He was also a mighty good wrestler. No wrestler dared to fight him in a wrestling match.

The Guru was greatly pleased with Paine Khan. He used to make him presents of valuable

clothes, horses, and such articles of food as could promote bodily strength.

A few years later, an imperial army attacked the Guru at Amritsar. The army had been sent by the Mughal governor of Lahore. A bloody battle was fought at the site of the present-day Gurdwara Pipli Sahib. The Mughal army was defeated. In the battle, Painde Khan fought very bravely. He killed a large number of Mughal soldiers and army officers. The Guru praised and rewarded him.

But soon Painde Khan's head was turned. He became proud of his strength and bravery. He began to boast, 'It is needless for the Guru to enlist so many soldiers. I am as good as an army of these people. If I am allowed, I will show the Guru's enemies what I can do. It is I that defeated the countless Mughal army at Amritsar. Had I not been there, no one would have had the courage to face them. The Guru's Sikhs would have all fled.'

The Guru was greatly displeased to hear these boasts of Painde Khan. He felt that Painde Khan had insulted his brave Sikhs. He decided that Painde Khan should not be called upon to take part in any future battle. Still, Painde Khan was allowed to keep his rank as an army officer. He was paid his salary regularly. He was also given valuable presents, now and then. But he was not called upon to take part in any battle.

Once, a devout Sikh made the Guru a present of a horse, a hawk, a dress, and some weapons. The Guru gave the hawk to his son Baba Gurditta. All the other offerings he gave to Painde Khan, and said to him, 'Whenever you come to my darbar, put on this dress, wear these weapons, and ride this horse.'

Painde Khan's son-in-law, Usman Khan, saw these presents. He asked Painde Khan to give all the presents to him. Painde Khan said, 'The Guru ordered me to use these presents myself. I have to appear before him in this dress, wearing these weapons, and riding this horse. I cannot part with them. I cannot disobey the Guru. He will be displeased. He will dismiss me from his service.'

But Usman Khan managed to get these things with the help of Painde Khan's wife. He also caught the hawk that had been given to Baba Gurditta. Painde Khan knew all this. But he was helpless. He kept mum.

After a time, Guru Har Gobind sent for Painde Khan. He came on foot, wearing dirty clothes. The Guru said to him, 'Where are the clothes, the weapons, and the horse that I gave you ? Speak the truth.'

Painde Khan replied, "All those things are in my possession. On receiving your orders, I hastened to come to you without changing my dress. In hurry, I did not saddle the horse ; I did



Guru Har Gobind and Painde Khan.

not put on the weapons. I swear by you that I speak the truth.'

The Guru then said, 'Do you, or any of your people, possess Gurditta's hawk?' Painde Khan replied, 'I swear by you that I know nothing about the hawk.'

The Guru said to Bhai Bidhi Chand in his ear, 'Go and bring all the presents and the hawk.' Bhai Bidhi Chand went to Usman Khan's house. He found him asleep. He quietly took away all those things. During his absence, the Guru again urged Painde Khan to tell the truth. But he swore, for the third time, that he knew nothing about the hawk and that the Guru's presents were all in his possession at his home.

By then, Bhai Bidhi Chand had come back. The Guru called on him to produce the sword, the dress, and the hawk that he had brought from Usman Khan's house.

On seeing them, Painde Khan became speechless. But he did not repent. He did not beg the Guru's pardon. The Guru ordered him to be expelled from the darbar. Painde Khan said angrily, 'I will go and complain to the Emperor. You will suffer as your father did. Then I shall have my revenge.'

Painde Khan went away in anger. He and his son-in-law made plans against the Guru. They

went to the governors of Jullundur and Lahore. They told them many things against the Guru. They urged them to attack him. They agreed. They got the Emperor's permission to attack the Guru. Painde Khan induced five hundred Muhammedan horsemen to join him. Along with them he joined the governors' armies.

The governors of Lahore and Jullundur, Painde Khan, Usman Khan, and the Pathans of Bassi fell upon the Guru. Their army numbered more than twenty thousand. The Guru was then at Kartarpur. He was prepared to meet his enemies. His army was six thousand strong. All his soldiers were determined to fight to the last. 'Death or victory' was their war-cry.

The battle lasted three days. The Guru's soldiers performed wonderful feats of bravery and strength. They killed thousands of their enemies. The governors of Lahore and Jullundur were killed by the Guru himself. Then Painde Khan attacked the Guru. But the Guru killed him with a single stroke of his sword. When Painde Khan fell dead, the Guru felt pity and regret. He took off his shield and put it on Painde Khan's face so as to shade it from the sun. He then, prayed to God to pardon Painde Khan, and grant him a seat in heaven.

VIII

SADHU AND RUPA

Once, a Sikh named Sadhu and his fifteen-year old son named Rupa were working in their fields. It was summer. The day was very hot. They filled a new, clean, earthen pot with water from a well. They hung the pot on a tree.

After some time, they felt thirsty. Sadhu took down the earthen pot from the tree. The water in the pot had become very cool. They thought, 'The water is very cool. It is fit for Guru Har Gobind. It would be nice if the Guru were to come and drink it. How lucky should we be ! The day is extremely hot. We are very thirsty. But we should not drink this water. Let us set it aside for the Guru. Let us pray to him to come and take it. We shall satisfy our thirst only after he has drunk a part of this pure, cool water.'

Thinking thus, they hung back the earthen pot on the tree. They sat with folded hands. They began to pray, 'O dear, true Guru come and drink this pure, cool water, as much of it as you like. It is more than enough for you and us. But we shall not satisfy our thirst until you have drunk out of this pot. O dear, true Guru, you always fulfil the desires of your servants. You hear and answer

their prayers. Hear and accept our prayer now. Come and drink some of this pure, cool water. We may die of thirst, but we will not drink even a drop until you have partaken of this water.'

The day was very hot. They were very thirsty. Their throats and lips were dry. But they did not even think of satisfying their thirst. Their minds were fixed on the Guru. They went on thinking of him, and praying to him, and waiting for him.

Guru Har Gobind was at that time taking rest in a cool room, over fifteen kilometres away. He heard their prayer. He got up at once. He mounted his horse. He started towards the two Sikhs. He rode at a gallop. He reached there. He found them fainting on account of the heat and thirst. They were overjoyed to see him coming. He said to them, 'O my dear Sikhs, I am very thirsty; give me some cool water to allay my thirst.'

Full of joy, they took down the earthen pot. They gave it to him. He was pleased at the touch of the very cool earthen pot. He found the water to be very cool and pleasant. He had a hearty drink. Then he gave back the earthen pot to Sadhu. He said, 'Drink now. Satisfy your thirst as I have satisfied mine. The water is excellent. It is like nectar. It is very cool, pleasant, and refreshing. It is the sweetest and most pleasant drink I have ever had. I am highly pleased with you. Have you any special wish to get fulfilled ?

Come, let me know. You will get what you desire.'

Sadhu and Rupa satisfied their thirst. They said to the Guru, 'You are very kind. You have accepted our prayer. We are immensely glad. Kindly bless us so that we may ever love and serve you, that God may be pleased with us.'

The Guru said, 'You are blessed. Your name will live in the world. Whenever you have some difficulty, pray to God, think of Guru Nanak. You will overcome your difficulty.'

They bowed and touched the Guru's feet. They were extremely happy and grateful. They continued to lead a life of work, service, and prayer. They ever did their best to make others happy and contented.

IX BABA ATAL

Baba Atal was a son of Guru Har Gobind. He was very smart, active, and sportive. He was deeply religious. When playing with the children of the city, he used to tell them many wise things. Whatever he said, even in jest, had some deep meaning. All his playmates loved and obeyed him. Guru Har Gobind was specially kind to him. He used to take him in his lap, fondle him, and say, 'God has given you much power. Don't make a show of it. If you have to use it, use it with caution and wisdom. Don't waste it away on little things.' Baba Atal used to say in reply, 'O true king, all power that I possess, I have obtained from you. Your store-house can never get empty. Therefore, I may use it to my heart's content. It will never get used up.'

One of Baba Atal's playmates was named Mohan. He was eight years of age. He was thus of about the same age as Baba Atal. He and Baba Atal used to play bat and ball. One day, they played on until night fell. At the end of the play, it was Baba Atal's turn to use the bat. It was Mohan's turn to throw and pick up the ball. It was agreed between them that Baba Atal would get his turn the next morning.

Both boys went home. At night, Mohan got up from his bed to answer the call of nature. The night was pitch dark. In the dark, he was bitten by a cobra. He began to cry loudly. His cries awoke his parents. They rushed to him. They found him fainting. They sent for a doctor. But the cobra's poison had done its work. The boy died of the snake-bite.

Next morning, Baba Atal went to Mohan's house. He found Mohan's parents and others weeping. He was told that Mohan was dead. Baba Atal said, 'No, he is not dead. He pretends to be dead. He does not wish to give me my turn with the bat. I will make him get up.'

Saying this, he went to Mohan's room. He touched him with his bat and said, 'Mohan, get up, say "*Sat Nam Wahiguru*". Open your eyes. You should not be so late to rise from bed. I must have my turn at the bat.'

Upon this, Mohan got up as if from sleep. He had been dead for four hours and a half. Naturally, his parents were filled with joy. Baba Atal and Mohan went out and began to play.

Guru Har Gobind came to know what his son had done. He was not at all pleased. He said, 'It has become a habit with Atal to waste away his powers. He has not acted well or wisely. Now, whenever any boy may die his parents will bring him to our door. Whose dead son shall we bring



him to say, 'Mohan get up. I must have my turn at the bat.'

back to life, and whose son shall we allow to remain dead ? We must all obey God's Will. We should not try to undo what He has done.'

When Baba Atal returned home, the Guru said to him angrily, 'I teach men to obey God's Will. But you act against His Will.' Baba Atal said, 'O true king, may you live for ages. I feel that I should go back to Our True Home.'

So saying, he went away. He took his bath in the sacred tank. He then went four times round the sacred temple of Har Mandar. Then he went to the tank named Kaulsar. He sat near its bank. Bending his head forward, he supported his chin with his bat. With his eyes fixed on the sacred temple, he repeated the *Japji*. Then he offered prayers. After that, he departed to the True Home or God's presence.

Guru Har Gobind soon learnt about Baba Atal's departure from the world. He advised his family and his Sikhs not to weep. He said, 'All have to die. Such is the Almighty's Will. What pleases him is good. We should accept it cheerfully. Atal's name and fame shall live for ever.'

Baba Atal's body was cremated at the spot where he had left it. The Guru said, 'Atal has, by God's Will, given up his body in his ninth year. A nine-storeyed temple shall be built here. It shall be seen from afar. At this shrine, the hungry will get food free, every day.'

At the spot stands a beautiful nine-storeyed gurdwara, called Baba Atal Sahib. Faithful Sikhs distribute cakes of bread to all visitors. The hungry people assemble there and repeatedly say,

‘O Baba Atal,

Pakkian pakaian ghal.’

‘O Baba Atal, send us well baked cakes.’

X

THE TENDER-HEARTED SOLDIER-GURU

Guru Har Rai was the seventh Guru of the Sikhs. Like his grandfather, Guru Har Gobind, he was a soldier as well as a saint. He had a strong body, as all soldiers should have. He was a fast and skilful rider. At the same time, he had a very tender heart, like all true saints. From his early life, he had shown a combination of strength of body and tenderness of heart. But his day-to-day life was moulded more by his tenderness of heart than by his strength of body.

His principal guiding principles in life were two. Both of them were the result of his tenderness of heart. The first of these principles was to do good to others. He felt joy in doing good to others, even to those who were his enemies. Nothing was more pleasing to him than a good and kind act. The second principle of his life was to avoid causing pain, harm or grief to anyone.

Guru Har Rai fashioned his life and activities in the light of these two guiding principles. This fact will be clear from what is given below :

He ran a free dispensary for all. His storehouse contained even most rare and costly medicines. All

the sick and injured persons who came there for treatment, were served with care and tenderness. In this way, he put into practice his principle of doing good to others.

We know that Guru Nanak started the practice of running the Guru's *langar* or free kitchen for all. This practice was followed by the later Gurus, too. Free food was given to all during the usual hours of the morning and evening meals. Guru Har Rai paid special attention to the Guru's *langar*. To those who worked in the free kitchen, he gave the following instructions, 'The kitchen must be open to all comers, day and night, at all hours. Additional food must always be kept ready, even after the usual hours of meals. Whoever comes to the kitchen, early or late, must be served properly. None should be sent away disappointed. If you refuse food to a hungry visitor, you cause him pain and suffering. To cause pain or grief to anyone's heart is a sin. Remember always what Baba Farid has said in this connexion. He has said,

"All men's hearts are jewels, it is
wicked to cause them grief or pain.

If you desire to see the dear Lord, cause
no grief or pain to anyone's heart."

'The heart deserves more care and respect than even the temple or the mosque. The temple and

the mosque can be repaired or rebuilt. But it is impossible to repair or rebuild a broken heart.'

He desired his Sikhs to act in the same manner. He desired them to run free kitchens and to share their food with others. When his Sikhs came to visit him, he used to ask them, 'Do you run free kitchens ? Do you share your food with others ? Do you feed persons who come after the time fixed for distribution of food ?'

He used to tell them, 'No one who comes to your door for food, should go away disappointed. Treat all such visitors in the same way as you treat your relations. Serve them with affection, even if they come before or after the time fixed for distribution of food.'

He would then repeat to them Baba Farid's words given above. He would also tell them his own views on the matter.

Guru Har Rai was a mighty hunter like his grandfather. In the afternoon, he used often to mount his horse and go out for a hunt. He chased and caught wild animals like the deer. But he did not kill them. His tender heart would not let him do so. He brought them home, and let them loose in his zoo. They were protected and fed there with kindness and care.

XI

GURU HAR RAI AND DARA SHIKOH

Dara Shikoh was the eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan. The Emperor loved him more than he did any of his other three sons. Once the prince fell dangerously ill. The best doctors were consulted. They all did their utmost. But they could not cure the prince. The Emperor then called together a large number of wise men and doctors from all over the empire. They discussed and considered the matter very carefully. They decided what medicines should be given to the suffering prince. For these articles the Emperor searched everywhere in his empire. But all search was in vain. The articles of the required weight and quality could not be found anywhere.

At last, the Emperor's prime minister said to him, 'Guru Har Rai's store contains all sorts of medicines. I am sure, these articles can be had from there.'

The Emperor was not at all friendly with the Guru and his Sikhs. He had filled up their famous sacred Baoli Sahib of Lahore. He had built a mosque on the site of the free kitchen there. He had caused much trouble to Guru Har Gobind.

On four occasions he had sent his armies against him. He also knew that his father, Jahangir, had ordered that Guru Arjan be killed with tortures. He also knew that Jahangir had imprisoned Guru Har Gobind. 'Guru Har Rai,' he said, 'knows all this. How can I expect him to be kind to me ?'

But his prime minister said to him, 'Guru Har Rai is full of kindness and sympathy for all. His main principle is to do good to others, even to his enemies. He bears enmity to none. All who seek his help, are treated by him with kindness. If you request him for these articles, he will not disappoint you.'

The Emperor sent one of his men with a letter to the Guru. In it he prayed to the Guru to forget the bitter past. He appealed to him to send the articles needed to cure Dara Shikoh. The Guru was true to his principles of life. He would return good for evil. So, he sent the needed articles most readily. In addition to the two articles asked by the Emperor, he sent a rare pearl. He said, 'The pearl should be ground into a fine powder and given to the prince along with the other medicines.'

Dara Shikoh was soon cured of his illness. The Emperor was filled with joy and gratitude. He decided to forget all his enmity to the Guru. He took a vow that he would never again cause him any trouble.



Guru Har Rai giving medicines for Dara Shikoh.

After some years Emperor Shah Jahan fell ill. His sons began to fight for the throne. Dara Shikoh was the eldest among them. Shah Jahan had wanted him to sit on the throne after him. But Aurangzeb fought against him, and defeated him. Dara Shikoh ran for his life. He came into the Panjab.

Aurangzeb issued an order that none should help or receive Dara Shikoh. It was added that any one doing any favour to Dara Shikoh, would incur Aurangzeb's highest displeasure. Dara Shikoh wandered from town to town, and village to village. No one gave him any help. He did not know what to do, and where to do.

At last, he thought of Guru Har Rai. He knew that the Guru's medicines had cured him. He felt sure that the Guru would help him. He knew that the Guru had an army of two thousand and two hundred horsemen. More could join, if he desired. So, he decided to meet him and beg for assistance. He met the Guru at Goindwal.

Now, Guru Har Rai was a skilful and mighty soldier. Guru Har Gobind had said to him, 'Keep two thousand and two hundred horsemen ever with you. But, as far as possible, avoid fighting.' By nature, also, he was a man of peace. He was determined to follow the policy of peace and friendliness.

Dara Shikoh met the Guru, and asked for help and advice. The Guru received him very kindly.

It was heard the next day that Aurangzeb's army was coming to catch him. He asked the Guru to prevent his being caught. He himself hurried towards Lahore.

The Guru sent his army to the Beas river. Aurangzeb's army soon arrived near the other bank. Seeing the Guru's horsemen, it halted there. It had no heart to fight. In this way Dara Shikoh was able to escape. After a day or two, the Guru's army returned from the river. Aurangzeb's army crossed the river and marched off towards Lahore.

XII

THE GURU HELD PRISONER BY A SIKH

A devout Sikh named Bhai Gonda served and waited upon Guru Har Rai. He served the Guru with love and sincerity. He always kept his mind fixed on God. He kept repeating God's Name while engaged in work or service. He treated others with sweet humility. In short, he was a saint in thought, word, and deed. He thought, spoke, and acted as a true saint should do. The Guru was very much pleased with his service and devotion.

One day the Guru said to him, 'Bhai Gonda, go to Kabul. Preach the Guru's religion there. Make people worship God and repeat His Name. Teach them the Guru's hymns. Teach them to repeat and sing these hymns. You will receive there offerings in plenty. With those offerings run a free kitchen. Feed and help all the needy ones that come to your door. Take care that no one goes away disappointed. The offerings will be more than you need for the free kitchen. What remains unused there, should be sent to me for the Guru's free kitchen here. Always remember God. Have full faith in Him and the Guru. You will be

successful. These are your duties. I hope that you will discharge them well.'

Now, Kabul was a far off place in another country. It was a foreign place. Bhai Gonda would be a foreigner there. The land was ruled by a Muhammadan king. Most of the people were Muhammadans. Hence, in those days it was not quite a safe place for a non-Muslim foreigner to live in. To preach, in such a place, any religion other than Islam was even more dangerous. But Gonda had full faith in God and the Guru. He accepted the duties readily and cheerfully.

He set out for Kabul. On reaching there, he built a Sikh temple. He began to carry out the duties assigned to him by Guru Har Rai.

One morning, while repeating the *Japji*, he fixed his thoughts on the Guru. He pictured the Guru's feet in his mind. He clasped them tightly. He forgot everything else. He was completely absorbed in seeing the Guru with his mind's eye. He neither saw nor heard anything happening near about him.

Far away from him, the Guru was sitting on his throne. He, at once, became aware of what was passing in Bhai Gonda's mind. He felt that his feet were tightly held by that devout Sikh. He sat firmly on the throne. He did not move his feet even the least. He did not want to pull away his feet from Bhai Gonda's clasp.

Guru Har Rai remained sitting thus for several hours. At mid-day, a Sikh came to him and said, 'O true Guru, dinner is ready.' The Guru did not look up. He did not move. He made no reply. The Sikh went away, wondering. He returned after some time and said, 'O Guru, dinner is ready.' But the Guru made no reply. The Sikh went away again, deeply puzzled. He returned after a longer interval. He again said, 'O true Guru, dinner is ready. May I serve it up?' But the Guru sat unmoved and silent. He seemed to have heard nothing at all.

The Sikhs grew uneasy. Several of them gathered near the Guru. They were just about to speak out together. The Guru opened his eyes. He broke silence and said, 'Brother Sikhs, Bhai Gonda is in Kabul. He has clasped my feet. How can I withdraw them from him? I have been his prisoner since morning. How can I take my dinner until he releases me? As long as he holds me by the feet, I cannot move; I must wait.'

The Guru remained sitting thus till sunset. It was then that Bhai Gonda woke up and came to himself. He opened his eyes. He bowed. He repeated '*Sat Nam Wahiguru*' a number of times. Then he took away his mind from the Guru's feet. The Guru felt that his feet were free from Bhai Gonda's clasp. He opened his eyes. Then it was that he took his meal.

XIII

AURANGZEB AND GURU HAR RAI

Emperor Shah Jahan desired that, after him, his eldest son, Dara Shikoh, should become the Emperor. He fell ill. His sons thought that he was about to die. They began to fight among themselves for the throne. Aurangzeb defeated his brothers. Dara Shikoh ran away to save his life. He was caught and killed by Aurangzeb. Another of his brothers left the country to save his life. The third brother was imprisoned by him at Agra. He also kept his father a prisoner at the same place. It was thus that he became the Emperor. He was soon secure on the throne of Delhi. There was none to oppose him.

Aurangzeb was clever, hard-hearted, and cruel. He had come to believe that his own religion was the only true religion. He thought that all other religions were false. He made up his mind to make Islam the religion of all his subjects. Most of his subjects were Hindus. So, he decided to uproot the Hindu religion. He pulled down Hindu temples and broke their idols. He built mosques in their place. Thousands of temples were destroyed by his orders. Thousands of Hindus were forced to become Muhammadans.

In the meantime, complaints were made to Aurangzeb against Guru Har Rai. It was said that the Guru had blessed and assisted Dara Shikoh. He was preaching a religion of his own. Many Muhammadans were becoming his followers. Moreover, his sacred book, Granth Sahib, contained many remarks against Muhammadans and their religion. So, it was added, the Guru was an enemy of the Emperor. He was also an enemy of Islam. Action should be taken against him.

Aurangzeb decided to find out the truth about the Guru and his religion. He sent for the Guru. The Guru said that he had made a vow never to see Aurangzeb. He called together his principal Sikhs. The matter was discussed with them. They suggested that the Guru's elder son, Sri Ram Rai, should go to Delhi. He should meet the Emperor, and answer all his questions. Sri Ram Rai agreed to go. Guru Har Rai permitted him to do so.

Sri Ram Rai got ready to set out for Delhi. Guru Har Rai said to him, 'In all your words and actions, you should fix your thoughts on God. Say nothing and do nothing that may be against the principles of the Sikh religion. The Emperor might make some objections to the Granth Sahib. Answer him calmly, but fearlessly. Remember one thing. The Emperor Jahangir wanted Guru Arjan to omit some passages from the Granth Sahib. He said that those passages contained certain remarks

against the Muhammadans and their religion. But Guru Arjan refused to alter even a letter or a vowel. He suffered much on that account. But he remained firm. His example should guide you. In all things, rely on God and the Guru. Keep true to the principles of Guru Nanak's faith. All will go well with you.'

Sri Ram Rai agreed to remember and obey the Guru's wishes. He set out for Delhi. On reaching there, he met the Emperor. He was well received at the Emperor's court. Aurangzeb put him many questions. The first was, 'Why did your father help Dara Shikoh?' Sri Ram Rai replied, 'The Guru has no enmity with anyone. His chief principle is to do good to others, even to those who are his enemies. If anyone in difficulty comes to him for help, he can never send him away disappointed. Dara Shikoh was in great trouble. He appealed to the Guru to save his life. He had already saved his life from a terrible illness. The Guru could not send him away broken-hearted. He did a good and holy act in saving a life in danger. He did nothing against you. He or his army did not fight against you or your army.'

The Emperor then said, 'Your Guru Nanak has written against the Muhammadans and their religion. In one place he has said :

"The clay of a Mussalman may find its way into the hands of a ptoter ;



Shri Ram Rai at the court of Aurangzeb.

He makes vessels and bricks out of it,
It cries out as it burns.”

‘Why,’ said the Emperor, ‘have the Mussalmans been thus abused in your Sacred Book ?’

Sri Ram Rai did not wish to displease the Emperor. He made up his mind to alter the line of Guru Nanak’s hymn in order to please Aurangzeb. He forgot the orders which Guru Har Rai had given him. He said, ‘Your Majesty, Guru Nanak wrote, “*Mitti beiman ki*”, that is “the clay of a faithless person !” He did not write “*Mitti Mussalmanki*”, that is, “the clay of a Mussalman.” His words have been wrongly reported to you.’

The Emperor was pleased at this reply. He gave Sri Ram Rai a jagir in the Doon valley. Guru Har Rai was soon informed of what his son had done. The Guru was greatly pained to hear of his son’s lack of truth and courage. He said, ‘Ram Rai is not fit for Guruship He should not show his face to me.’

So, Guru Har Rai made up his mind that his younger son, Sri Har Krishan, would be the Guru after him.

XIV

GURU HAR KRISHAN INVITED TO DELHI

Guru Har Krishan was a little over five years old when he became the Guru. But he began to do his duties in a very good manner. His elder brother, Sri Ram Rai, had wanted to become the Guru after his father, Guru Har Rai. But that Guru had declared him to be unfit for Guruship. Sri Ram Rai did not accept his father's decision. He decided to ignore it. He called himself the Guru. He sent his men in all directions. He said to them, 'Make it known everywhere that I am the Guru.' But the Sikhs knew of Guru Har Rai's decision. They refused to accept Sri Ram Rai as the Guru.

Sri Ram Rai was much disappointed. But he did not lose hope. He did not give up his plan to get the Guruship. He decided to place his case before Emperor Aurangzeb. He knew that the Emperor was pleased with him. Hence, he hoped that he would decide in his favour.

He met the Emperor. He said to him, 'The Guruship was my right. But my father passed it on to my younger brother. Help me to get back my right.'

Aurangzeb decided to send for Guru Har Krishan. He called Raja Jai Singh of Ambar and

said to him, 'Go to Kiratpur or send someone there. Bring Guru Har Krishan to Delhi. I must hear him before deciding Ram Rai's case.'

Sri Ram Rai was delighted on hearing Aurangzeb's orders to summon the Guru. He said to himself, 'Now I shall surely succeed. If my brother disobeys the Emperor, the Emperor will send an army to destroy him. If he obeys the Emperor, he will be disobeying our father's orders to him. He will become a greater sinner than I. The Sikhs will rise against him. If he runs away in fear, I shall go and occupy his place.'

Raja Jai Singh had often heard the Guru's praises. He was eager to see and hear him. The Sikhs of Delhi also urged him to invite the Guru. They said to him, 'Inform the Guru that not the Emperor only, but the Sikhs of Delhi also, are eager to see him.'

The Raja sent a high officer to Kiratpur. He was told to invite the Guru to Delhi. He was to treat him with great respect. The officer arrived at the Guru's darbar. He delivered Raja Jai Singh's message to the Guru. The Guru knew that his brother had prevailed upon Aurangzeb to summon him. He told the officer that he would give a reply on the morrow.

At night, the Guru's mother said to him, 'What advice should I give you ? Your elder brother is very clever and cunning. He is your enemy. The

Emperor is pleased with him. He may be planning to harm you.'

The Guru replied, 'Mother dear, don't have any doubts or fears. All will happen as God has decided. What can any man do against His Will or Order ? God will help me. My father told me not to see Aurangzeb. I shall obey my father. I will not see the Emperor.'

Next day the Guru sent for the officer and said, 'I cannot meet the Emperor. Such was my father's last desire. If your Raja and the Sikhs of Delhi want to see me, I shall go to them. But if the Raja wants me to see the Emperor, I must decline the invitation.' The officer said, 'The Raja has promised to invite you to Delhi. He has not promised to take you to the Emperor. Still, I shall write to Raja Sahib and get exact information.'

The Raja's reply was soon received. He said, 'The Sikhs of Delhi and I request you to come to Delhi, so that we may see you. As regards the Emperor, you may or may not see him, as you like. Nobody will force you to act against your wishes. You will be my guest and stay with me.'

On hearing this, the Guru said, 'That is all right. I will go to meet the Raja and the Sikhs of Delhi. I shall start the day after tomorrow.'

XV

ON THE WAY TO DELHI

Guru Har Krishan's elder brother, Sri Ram Rai, made an application to Emperor Aurangzeb. In it he said that the Guruship was his right. But it had been unjustly passed on to his younger brother. Aurangzeb decided to see and hear Guru Har Krishan, before passing orders on Sri Ram Rai's application. He, therefore, desired Raja Jai Singh to call the Guru to Delhi. The Guru was unwilling to go. He had been advised by his father not to see the Emperor. He did not want to act against his father's advice or orders. But Raja Jai Singh removed the difficulty. He said to the Guru, 'I humbly beg to invite you to my house. Come to my bungalow. Be my honoured guest. The Sikhs of Delhi are thirsting to see you. You may or may not see the Emperor. Nobody will force you to see him.'

The Guru accepted the Raja's invitation. He set out for Delhi. His mother decided to go with him. A large number of Sikhs also started with them. Many more joined on the way, every day. Some of them had come from distant places to see the Guru. He met them all with kind affection. He

told them of God and His kindness. He talked to them of their duty to God, their duty to their own selves, and their duty to God's children. He explained to them the main principles of Guru Nanak's religion. He urged them to live and act as Guru Nanak had shown them to do. Among them there were many suffering from this or that disease. He blessed them. He prayed for them. They were cured.

After a time, the Guru and his party reached the village of Panjokhra, near Ambala. The Guru decided that the large number of Sikhs should not go further. He drew a line on the ground and said, 'No Sikh should cross this line.' They all came to a halt. The Guru bade them farewell. He said to them, 'If any Sikh desires to see me, let him stand here and pray. His wishes will be granted' There is now a gurdwara on the spot in memory of the Guru's visit.

The Guru then started on his journey to Delhi. His mother and a few chosen Sikhs went with him; for all others had gone back.

While the Guru and his party were at Panjokhra, a Sikh came and said to the Guru, 'In a place nearby, there lives a Brahmin. He is very proud. He asked me your name. I told him that your name is Sri Har Krishan. Hearing this, he became very angry. He said, "The god Sri Krishan gave us the teachings contained in the Bhagwadgita. Your

Guru calls himself Sri Har Krishan. Now, Har is a name of God. So it would seem that he thinks himself to be superior to Sri Krishan. If he thinks that way, let him discuss the Gita and its meanings with me." O true Guru, his pride should be humbled.'

The Guru agreed to let the Brahmin come to him. The Sikh went and called the Brahmin. The Brahmin came. He did not salute or bow to the Guru. He sat down with a proud look on his face. Then he said, 'You call yourself Sri Har Krishan. You ought to be greater than god Sri Krishan. He gave us the Gita. I would like you to explain and discuss the Gita with me.'

The Guru said, 'With God's grace, any Sikh, any man in the street can do that. Go and bring some simple, ignorant villager. He will discuss the Gita and other books with you. When you have defeated him, I shall speak to you.'

The Brahmin went away. Soon he came back with an ignorant water-carrier called Chhajju. The latter stood staring at the Guru. The Guru placed the end of his stick on Chhajju's head. He looked him full in the face. Then he said to the Brahmin, 'Chhajju has become a greater scholar than you. You may discuss the Gita and other religious books with him.'

The Brahmin and the water-carrier began the

discussion. The water-carrier gave such replies that the Brahmin became speechless.

The Brahmin admitted defeat. His pride of learning left him. He fell at the Guru's feet. He begged forgiveness for his rude and proud behaviour. He said, 'I see that you are holy god Krishan himself. You are even greater than he. O true King, make me your Sikh.'

The Guru accepted his prayer. He explained to him the three golden rules of life preached by Guru Nanak, namely—'ever to remember God, to earn one's livings with honest labour, and to share one's earnings with the needy.' Above all, added the Guru, 'Be sweet and humble in your dealings with others. Never let pride enter your heart. Sweet humility is the essence of all virtues. It never fails to win.'

After this, the Guru started towards Delhi. He reached there in due course.



The Emperor sent his son to meet Guru Har Krishan.

XVI

GURU HAR KRISHAN IN DELHI

When Guru Har Krishan reached Delhi, Raja Jai Singh went forth bare-footed to receive him. He took him to his own bungalow. There he made every arrangement for the Guru's comfort. At the place now stands the grand Gurdwara called Bangla Sahib.

Emeperor Aurangzeb wished very much to see the Guru. He conveyed this wish of his to the Guru through a special messenger. Thereupon, the Guru desired Raja Jai Singh to speak to the Emperor on this point. He said to the Raja, 'You know my father's last words to me. I cannot go against them. I cannot see the Emperor. Persuade him not to insist on seeing me.'

The Raja succeeded in persuading the Emperor to accept the Guru's wishes. The Emperor sent a son of his to meet and talk with the Guru. The prince said to the Guru, 'Your elder brother, Ram Rai, has made a complaint against you. He says that the Guruship was his right. It has been unjustly made over to you. What have you to say about that matter? The Emperor wants to know that before deciding the matter.'

The Guru replied, 'The Guruship is not a jagir. It is not a form of worldly property. No one can claim it as a matter of right. It goes to the fittest person. The departing Guru makes the selection. His election is final. No one can question it. Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, and Guru Amar Das rejected their own sons. They chose their best Sikhs to occupy the Guru's seat after them. Guru Ram Das chose his younger son to be the Guru after him. Guru Har Gobind left out his sons and selected his younger grandson to be the Guru. Similarly, my father chose me, and not my elder brother, for the Guruship. His choice cannot be questioned. The Emperor should not interfere in this matter. It is a domestic matter of the Sikh Gurus.'

On hearing this, the prince said, 'I fully agree with you. I shall explain the whole matter to the Emperor. He will not trouble you any more. Ram Rai's claim is false. His complaint will be dismissed.'

Crowds of Sikhs came, every day, to see and pay respects to the Guru. It so happened that a severe form of cholera broke out in Delhi. Many died of cholera everyday. People prayed to the Guru to save them. The Guru sent for a jug of water. He touched it with his hands and toes. He said a short prayer. Then he said, 'Mix this water with the water in the reservoir. Everyone who takes a sip of it will be cured.'

This was done. All who took sips of the water, got rid of cholera.

The Emperor wanted to test the Guru's intelligence and spiritual powers. He desired Raja Jai Singh to do so in some manner. The Raja promised to try. He and his head queen made a plan. She was to dress herself as a maid-servant. So dressed, she was to sit among her maid-servants, behind the other queens. Some other women were also to dress themselves as queens and sit among them. The Guru was to be invited. If he recognized the head queen, it would be a proof of his spiritual powers.

Raja Jai Singh went to the Guru. He said, 'My queens are very eager to see you. The head queen is particularly eager to do so. Do kindly go with me.' The Guru guessed the Raja's plan. He did not like to make a show of his spiritual powers in this way. But the Raja begged him, again and again, to accept the invitation. The Guru agreed. He went with the Raja.

On reaching the Raja's palace, the Guru saw the queens and maid-servants ready to receive him. The Guru touched the front queen with his stick and said, 'You are not the head queen !' In this way, he touched the other ladies dressed as queens. He rejected them all. Then he went among the maid-servants. The head queen was among them, dressed like them. The Guru went up to her. He

touched her with the end of his stick and said,
'Here is the head queen.'

The Emperor was informed of the success of the plan. He said, 'I admit that the Guru is what his followers believe him to be. He is the rightful Guru. His father's choice of him was wholly right. Ram Rai's claim is false. It is dismissed. Guru Har Krishan may return to his place, at his sweet pleasure.'

XVII

“BABA BAKALE”

While Guru Har Krishan was staying in Delhi he had an attack of small-pox. The attack was very severe. The Guru felt that the end of his life on earth was near. He made ready to go. His Sikhs asked him who was to be the Guru after him. He called for five *paise* and a coconut. He took them in his hands. He waved his hands in the air, round and round, three times. Then he said, ‘Baba Bakale’. These were his last words. They meant that the next Guru was at the village of Bakala near Amritsar.

Soon afterwards, the Guru departed from the world. His body was cremated on the banks of the Jamuna. At that place now stands the Gurdwara Bala Sahib.

The Guru’s relatives heard of his last words. The words did not clearly say who was to be the Guru after him. The Guru’s greedy relatives took advantage of this fact. They flocked to the village Bakala. Each claimed to be the Guru. There were many such self-made Gurus like Dhir Mal.

By the way, Dhir Mal was the elder brother of Guru Har Rai and a grandson of Guru Har Gobind.

He was disloyal to the Guru. He had gone over to the Guru's enemy even during the lifetime of Guru Har Gobind. Hence, he had not been selected for the Guruship. But he had felt, all along, that he should have been selected for the Guruship instead of his younger brother, Guru Har Rai. Now he came forward in the field to claim the Guruship. We shall learn more about him later.

As usual, Sikhs from far and near came to see the Guru. They, too, had heard of Guru Har Krishan's last words. So they came to Bakala. They found there many persons claiming to be the Guru. These self-made Gurus took the Sikhs' offerings by deceit or force. The Sikhs were unable to discover the real Guru. They were greatly puzzled and very unhappy.

This state of things lasted for about a year. Then an event occurred which ended all doubts. It led to the discovery of the real Guru. It happened as stated below :

There was a Sikh named Makhan Shah Lubana. He was a trader, doing business in the Deccan. A ship full of his goods was once sailing on the sea. A severe storm began to blow. The ship began to sink. All efforts to save it seemed to be of no avail. Makhan Shah folded his hands and cried out, 'O Guru Nanak, save my ship from sinking. I shall make thee an offering of five hundred gold *mohars*, if my ship reaches the shore in safety.'

His prayer was granted. His ship reached the shore in safety. He came to the Panjab in order to make the offering. He had to make the offering to the Guru occupying Guru Nanak's *gaddi* or throne. He was told that the Guru was at Bakala. He went there. He found a large number of self-made Gurus. What was he to do? Who was the real Guru? To whom should he make the offering?

He thought of a plan to test the self-made Gurus. He said to himself, 'I shall go to every one of them, one after the other. I shall make an offering of two gold *mohars* to each. The false ones will accept them readily. The true Guru will claim the offering actually promised by me. In this way, I shall end all doubts. The Sikhs will know the true Guru. They will be mightily pleased. The Guru will begin to guide, teach, and save the Sikhs.'

Makhan Shah acted on this plan. He went to each one of the self-made Gurus, one after the other. He placed before each two gold *mohars* as his offering. Each of them was pleased at the sight of the gold coins. Each began to praise himself to the skies. Each declared that he was the true Guru. 'All others,' he would add, 'are false. They are all pretenders.'

Makhan Shah visited all the self-made Gurus, one after the other. None of them claimed the offering actually promised. He came to the conclusion that none of them was the real Guru. He enquired

if there was any other person belonging to the Guru's family. He was told, 'There is another man. People call him Tegha. He is a son of Guru Har Gobind. His full name is Tegh Bahadur. He lives in silence, away from the world. He makes no claim to the Guruship.'

Makhan Shah went to the house pointed out to him. He met the Guru's mother. He requested for an interview with her son. She said, 'He spends his time in worship and prayer, all by himself. He does not like to be disturbed. I shall go and ask him. If he agrees to receive you, I shall take you to him.'

She went to her son. She told him of the visitor. He thought within himself, 'Makhan Shah has tested all the pretenders. He has not found the real Guru. If I continue to conceal myself, he will be disappointed. He will lose faith in the Guru. Moreover, the Sikhs feel lost and guideless. I must show myself and take up the duties assigned to me by Guru Har Krishan.'

So thinking, he requested his mother to let the visitor come in. Thus, Makhan Shah was permitted to see Guru Tegh Bahadur. He went in. He found the latter absorbed in thinking of God. He bowed and placed two gold *mohars* before him. The Guru opened his eyes. He saw the two gold coins placed before him. He saw Makhan Shah



Makhan Shah discovers the Guru.

seated near him. He said, 'Makhan Shah, you are breaking your promise. Why ? When your ship was sinking, you promised to make an offering of five hundred gold *mohars*. Your ship was saved. Now you are offering only two. How is it ?'

Makhan Shah was filled with joy. He fell at the Guru's feet. He placed five hundred gold *mohars* before the Guru. Then he rushed to the top of a house nearby. He waved a flag and shouted at the top of his voice, 'Congratulations, O dear Sikhs. I have found the true Guru. The true Guru has been found. He is living all alone. He has not claimed to be the Guru. But he is the Guru. Come and see him. Come, and beseech him to come out and guide us, his Sikhs.'

On hearing this, the Sikhs felt mightily pleased. There were great rejoicings among them. They gathered at the Guru's door. The Guru came out of his hiding place. He was duly seated on the Guru's throne.

XVIII

DHIR MAL'S FOUL DEEDS

Makhan Shah Lubana was able to discover the real Guru at Bakala. Guru Tegh Bahadur took his seat on the Guru's throne. He began to preach Guru Nanak's religion, vigorously. Sikhs from far and near came to pay their respects to the Guru. They made rich offerings to him.

Dhir Mal saw the many and valuable offerings made to Guru Tegh Bahadur. He began to burn with rage at the success of the Guru. He became terribly jealous. He made up his mind to put an end to the Guru's life. He desired one of his men to kill the Guru. That wicked man took about a score of men with him. They all fell upon the Guru. The man fired a shot at him. The bullet struck the Guru. He was wounded. But he showed no anger. He did not feel agitated. He remained perfectly calm. Dhir Mal's men packed and took away the Guru's property. The Guru did not mind the loss of his property. He remained calmly busy in thinking of God.

Makhan Shah heard of this happening. He decided to take revenge. He took a party of Sikhs with him. They all fell upon the house of Dhir

Mal. He closed his door. They forced it open. They took hold of the Guru's stolen property. They carried away some of Dhir Mal's own property also. This property included the Granth Sahib. They also caught the man who had fired at the Guru. They tied his hands behind his back. Thus bound, they took him to the Guru. The man fell at the Guru's feet and begged to be forgiven.

The Guru felt no anger against the man. He forgave him, most readily. He ordered his men to release him. Makhan Shah and others did not like this. They said that the man should not be allowed to go scot-free. They wanted him to be punished for his wicked deed. But the Guru was firm. He permitted his enemy to go away unharmed. He forgave him from the bottom of his heart.

Then he said to his Sikhs, 'I learn that you have brought away a lot of Dhir Mal's own property also. Return the whole of it to him.' The Sikhs did not like to do so. But they could not disobey the Guru. So they returned to Dhir Mal almost all his property. But they did not return the Granth Sahib. They thought that it was not his private property; it belonged to the Guru and his Sikhs.

The Guru saw that his Sikhs were filled with anger against his enemies. They were not inclined to forgive them. The Guru said to his Sikhs,

‘Never let anger enter your hearts. Regard it as your enemy number one. In anger man loses his senses. He becomes mad. He loses the power to judge what is right and what is wrong. In anger he commits worst sins and foulest crimes. The angry man’s life becomes like hell. Avoid being angry. Be ever kind, merciful and calm.’

‘On the other hand,’ added the Guru, ‘forgiveness is a great and noble virtue. Never miss an opportunity to exercise forgiveness. Think not of taking revenge. Leave it all to God. Worship Him. Pray to Him. He will bless you.’

The Guru wanted to live in peace. But his enemies did not let him live in peace. Their enmity and jealousy went on increasing, day by day. He did not like to pay them in their own coin. So, he made up his mind to go away from his enemies. He decided to go to Kiratpur.

So determined, he set out for that place. His family and a large number of Sikhs were with him. Soon they reached near the river Beas. The Guru saw some of his men carrying the Granth Sahib. He was displeased at the sight. He said to them, ‘I told you to return to Dhir Mal all his property. But I find that you have not returned the Granth Sahib. Why?’

The Sikhs said, ‘O true Guru, the Granth Sahib is not his private property. It belongs to the Guru. It belongs to his Sikhs. He should not get

it. That is why we did not give it back to him. Permit us to keep it as the Guru's property.'

But the Guru did not agree with them. He said, 'The sacred Book has been with him for long. Guru Har Gobind, Guru Har Rai, and Guru Har Krishan never wanted to get it from him. It must be returned to him.'

The Guru left the Book in a safe place in the dry bed of the river. He sent word to Dhir Mal to take it away from there. He did so. From that day the Book has remained with Dhir Mal's family at Kartarpur, Jullundur.

XIX

GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S EXTENSIVE TOURS

Guru Tegh Bahadur took up his duties as the ninth Guru in March 1666. At that time, Aurangzeb was the Emperor of India. Soon after becoming the Guru he founded Anandpur. The land needed for the purpose was purchased from the Raja of Kahlur.

Then he decided to make an extensive tour of the eastern provinces of India. He wanted to preach his faith among the people there. He visited important cities like Agra, Allahabad, Banaras, Gaya and Patna. Leaving his family at Patna, he went onwards to Bengal and Assam.

When in Assam, he received disturbing news from the Panjab. He decided to cut short his tour. He rushed back to the Panjab. Now, what was the disturbing news ? It was as given below.

We have seen how Aurangzeb had won the throne of Delhi. He had treated his father, brothers and their families in a most cruel and merciless manner. He could not be expected to behave kindly towards those who were not his kith and kin. Besides, he was a fanatic bigot. He thought that Islam, as he understood it, was

the only true religion in the world; that all other religions were false. He resolved that Islam should be the only religion in his empire.

But among the Muslims in his empire there were many who did not agree with him. They were pious and liberal-minded. They did not hate the non-Muslims. They wanted to be friends with them. They believed that Islam taught them to treat all human beings as their brothers. But Aurangzeb was cruel and narrow-minded. He did not like such pious and liberal-minded Muslims. He got them murdered.

Then he turned his attention to non-Muslims. He started compelling them to embrace Islam. In April 1669 he issued special and strict orders to the Governors of all provinces. He ordered them to destroy the temples and close the schools of the 'infidels'. Mosques were to be built on the sites of the temples. He also wanted them to make special efforts to compel the 'infidels' to become Muslims. The 'infidels' were to be told to choose between Islam and death. Those who did not accept Islam, were to be put to the sword. No mercy was to be shown to them.

Most of the 'infidels' or non-Muslims in Aurangzeb's empire were Hindus. So these efforts were mostly directed against them. But the Sikhs, too, were not spared. Their temples were also destroyed. Something more was done to create

difficulties for their Guru. In most towns and cities the Guru had his agents. They were called *masands*. They preached the Sikh faith. They collected the Sikhs' offerings and took them to the Guru. Aurangzeb ordered to Guru's *masands* to be driven out from the towns and cities.

This was the disturbing news received by the Guru in Assam. It made him sad. He said to himself, 'I must return to the Panjab. My people are in great distress. I must be among them. I must encourage them to bear all sufferings with brave cheerfulness. I must prepare them to die rather than give up their faith.'

Accordingly, leaving his family still at Patna, he rushed back to the Panjab. He arrived at Anandpur. But he did not stay there for long. He decided to make an extensive whirlwind tour of the Malwa and the southern part of the Panjab. He wanted to prepare the people for what was coming. He wanted to fire them with a firm resolve to suffer but not to yield. He went from place to place. He passed through the Malwa and then the southern Panjab. He visited countless places and spoke to countless people. What did he say to them ? Here is the substance of what he said.

'Look around and see what the Mughal rulers are doing. Throw away all fear. Get ready to suffer for your faith. Take a vow that you will

give up your life, but will not give up your faith. Prepare yourselves to fight the cruel people. Time will soon come when you will have to fight for the defence of your faith. Emperor Aurangzeb wants that Islam should be the only religion in his empire. He wants the non-Muslims to choose between Islam and death. You, too, may soon have to make that choice. Be ready to make the right choice. Prepare yourselves to face and fight the tyrants in defence of your *dharma*. God will help you. The Emperor will, I feel, turn his attention to me, sooner or later. He will issue orders for my arrest. He will tell me to choose between Islam and death. Need I tell you what choice I shall make ? He will torture me. He will get me murdered. That is certain to happen. But don't feel dejected or downcast. Don't give way to despair. I feel that after that happens, the path of peaceful activity and suffering will have to be given up. You know that after the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, his son and my father, Guru Har Gobind, had to change the Sikhs from saints to saints-soldiers. He fought four battles with the Mughals. He fought because he was attacked. He defeated the attackers everytime. Similarly, after my death, my son will take up arms. My father had told my mother that her grandson, that is, my son, will be a great warrior; that he would convert jackals into tigers, and sparrows into hawks. Get ready for that change.

Get ready to fight and win under his leadership.'

Aurangzeb was, at that time, at Hasan Abdal. You have already heard of that place. It was the same place where Guru Nanak had humbled Bawa Wali Qandhari. It lies between Rawalpindi and Kabul. He had gone there to quell the rebellion of the Pathans. His reporters sent him reports about Guru Tegh Bahadur's activities. They said, 'He is becoming very popular, powerful, and influential. He is going about the country with many thousand men at his back. He is collecting huge funds. If this process goes on unchecked, his power will increase. He might raise the standard of rebellion.'

As said above, the Emperor was then busy in quelling the Pathan rebellion. He had no time to make enquiries about the allegations made against the Guru. His fears were, no doubt, aroused but he took no immediate action, issued no orders. But some time after, he received another report against the Guru. Thereupon, he decided to act, to end the Guru's life and activities. What was that report? We shall see that presently.

XX

KASHMIRI PANDITS' PRAYER

Kashmir is called the Paradise of India. The Mughal emperors were very fond of it. It was mostly peopled by Hindus. Aurangzeb was particularly eager to make Kashmir a purely Muslim province. Accordingly, he had issued special orders to the governor there for this purpose. The latter started to act in obedience to the Emperor's orders. In 1671, the Governor, Nawab Saif Khan, was transferred. His place was taken by Nawab Iftikhar Khan. This man was a zealous executor of Aurangzeb's policy towards the Hindus. He began to work with zeal to carry out that policy, to make Kashmir a cent per cent Muslim province. He began to make all-out efforts to finish off the Hindus in Kashmir. He told them to choose between Islam and death. Those who refused to accept Islam, were beheaded publicly.

After some time, Nawab Iftikhar Khan said to himself, 'The Pandits of Kashmir are very able, clever and learned. I should pay special attention to them. Their conversion will be a great gain to the Muslim world. Moreover, if they accept Islam, the lower-caste Hindus will follow their example.'

I shall not have to shed blood any more.'

He sent for the leading Pandits of Kashmir. He said to them, 'I have received specially urgent orders from the Emperor. He wants me to convert you or kill you. This has to be done without any delay. So you have to choose between Islam and death. And you have to make the choice without any delay. Go, think and decide. Let me know your decision tomorrow.'

The Kashmiri Pandits discussed the matter for a good part of the night. In the morning, they said to the governor, 'Give us six months' time to consider the matter.' He acceded to their request quite readily.

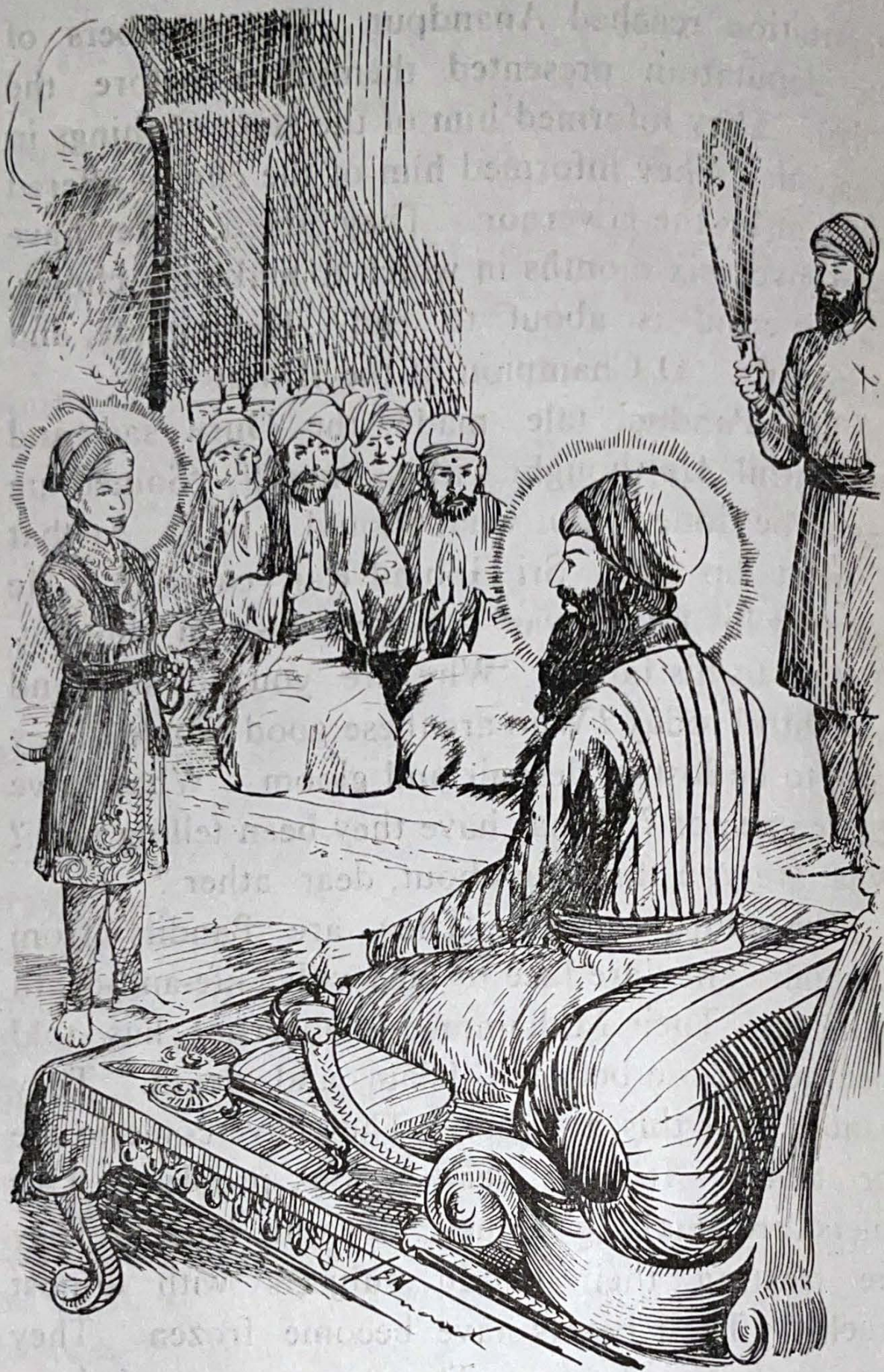
They went away. They and their people offered special prayers to their gods and goddesses. But all was in vain. One night, one of them went to bed after day-long prayers and discussion. His last prayer, when going to sleep, was, 'O God, give us light. Tell us what to do.' Soon, he heard a voice. It said, 'Go to Anandpur. Meet Guru Tegh Bahadur. Appeal to him for help and guidance. God has sent him to protect the Hindu religion. He is the Champion of the Hindus.'

He told his friends and companions of the voice that he had heard. They all said, 'The voice has given us the right advice. It was, no doubt, the voice of God Himself.' They decided to send a deputation to wait upon Guru Tegh Bahadur. The

deputation reached Anandpur. The members of the deputation presented themselves before the Guru. They informed him of the state of things in Kashmir. They informed him of the choice offered to them by the governor. They added, 'We have been given six months in which to make the choice. That period is about to end. Help, guide, and protect us, O Champion of the Hindus.'

The Pandits' tale made the Guru sad and thoughtful. He thought within himself, 'Something has to be done. But what should it be?' At that moment his son, Sri Gobind Rai, came in. He saw that his father was sad and lost in thought. He said to his father, 'Why are you so sad and thoughtful today? Who are these good people? They seem to be lost in despair and gloom. What have they come for? What have they been telling you? What are you thinking about, dear ather?'

The Guru replied, 'They are Pandits from Kashmir. They are face to face with a life-and-death problem. Their Muhammadan governor has told them to choose between Islam and death. They want neither this nor that. They have come to me for advice. It is a very serious problem. Our rulers are making a hell of our land. They are treating their Hindu subjects with utmost cruelty. Their hearts have become frozen. They are no longer human. They have come to behave like wild, fierce beasts. Their frozen, stony hearts



'For that sacrifice who can be fitter and more worthy than you, dear father.'

have to be melted and softened. Their inhuman behaviour has to be made human. There seems to be only one way to do all this. Some great holy man should sacrifice himself. How and where to find such a one, is the question before me ? That is the problem which has made me sad and lost in thought. May God guide and help me !

His son was hardly eight years of age then. He replied at once, 'For that sacrifice, dear father, who can be fitter and more worthy than you ?' The Guru accepted his son's suggestion. He said to the Pandits of Kashmir, 'Go and say to the governor, "Guru Tegh Bahadur is our guide and leader. First make him a Mussulman. We shall follow his example." I am sure that he will agree. Leave the rest to me. I shall act as directed by the Lord above.'

The Pandits thanked the Guru. They bowed to him, and left for their province.

XXI

GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S MARTYRDOM

The Kashmiri Pandits thanked the Guru for his sympathy and guidance, and for his promise to sacrifice his life in order to save them. They went to the governor. They said to him what the Guru had told them to say. The governor lost no time in reporting the whole matter to the Emperor at Hasan Abdal. He sought his further orders.

The Emperor was filled with rage. He burst out, 'He has dared to express sympathy with the infidel Brahmans of Kashmir. He has chosen to stand in my way. I cannot brook this. He must die.'

He at once issued an order to the governor of Lahore. In it he said, 'Have the Guru arrested, fettered, and detained in prison. Report to me when that has been effected. Then wait for further orders.' The governor of Lahore passed on the order to the *faujdar* of Sarhind, Dilawar Khan; for Anandpur was in the territory under him. Dilawar Khan, in turn, asked the circle *kotwal* of Ropar, Noor Muhammad Khan Mirza, to arrest the Guru; for Anandpur was in his *ilaga*.

Now, the Guru was moving about from place to place accompanied by thousands of Sikhs. The

kotwal knew this. He said to himself, 'I should not try to arrest him when he has a large number of Sikhs with him. They are sure to create trouble. I must wait till I can find him to be alone or accompanied by only a few companions.' He sent his men to watch the Guru's movements. He said to them, 'Inform me when the Guru is alone or has only a few companions with him.'

The *kotwal*, Noor Muhammad Khan Mirza, thus waited for a suitable opportunity to arrest the Guru. He did not have to wait long. The Guru, accompanied by a few Sikhs, left Anandpur for another tour. That was in July 1675. He arrived at the village of Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar. He wanted to cross the Satluj for his onward journey. The *kotwal's* reporters reported to him accordingly. He acted at once. He reached Malikpur Rangharan, with a strong force of police. He called upon the Ranghars of the village to help him. The Ranghars were Muhammadans. They readily agreed to help the *kotwal*. The Jats of the village tried to prevent the arrest. But they were too few and much weaker than the *kotwal's* party. The police and the local Ranghars were too many and too strong for them. So the Guru and his companions were arrested.

The *kotwal* sent the Guru and his companions to Sarhind. There he was fettered, chained, and detained in prison. The *faujdar* of Sarhind

reported the Guru's arrest to the Emperor's officers at Delhi. He asked them what was to be done to the Guru. The Guru was kept at Sarhind for three months and a half. All the time he was kept fettered, chained and detained in prison; for such were the Emperor's orders. Then a *parwana* was received from Delhi. The *faujdar* was told to despatch the Guru to Delhi. Accordingly, the Guru was despatched to the capital, shut up in an iron cage. The Emperor was informed of all this. His further orders were sought about what was to be done to the Guru.

At Delhi, too, the Guru was kept fettered, chained, and shut up in an iron cage. The Subedar of Delhi and the royal Qazi did their utmost to persuade him to be converted to Islam. He refused to give up his faith. They began to torture him most cruelly. He remained firm, calm and unshaken. Then they killed his companions before his very eyes. They thought that the sight would make him change his mind. Bhai Mati Das was bound between two pillars and cut down with a saw. Bhai Dayal Das was boiled to death in a cauldron of boiling water. Bhai Sati Das was wrapped in cotton. Oil was poured on the cotton. It was then set on fire. He was thus roasted alive. These disciples of the Guru accepted and bore all this most cheerfully. They sacrificed their lives for their faith. They died with God

on their lips and their eyes fixed on the Guru.

By then the Emperor's orders were received about what was to be done to the Guru. He told his officers to say to the Guru, 'If you claim to be a true guru, a true prophet, sent by God to preach a religion, you should show some miracles to support your claim. Men sent by God as his prophets have the power to perform miracles. If you are a true Guru or prophet, you should be able to perform miracles. If you do not or cannot do so, you must accept Islam. If you refuse to do that you will be executed.'

The Emperor's men informed the Guru of the choices offered to him by the Emperor. The Guru replied, 'True men of God never perform miracles in order to save themselves from sufferings or to escape death. They don't perform miracles to prove their greatness, either. I will not show any miracles. I will not accept Islam. Do with me as you like.'

After the Guru had thus declared his decision, he was led out of his cage to the open place called Chandni Chowk. There he was beheaded. His head was cut off. This was done publicly, in the presence of a crowd of people. At the place where Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded, stands the gurdwara called Sis Ganj. His body was not permitted to be taken away. It was publicly exposed in the streets of Delhi. Strong guards were placed to prevent its being taken away.

At night, however, a daring Sikh managed to approach the place secretly. The guards did not notice him. He was a Ranghreta Sikh belonging to the sweeper class. His name was Bhai Jaita. He succeeded in taking possession of the Guru's head. He hurried with it to Anandpur. There he presented it to Guru Tegh Bahadur's son, Guru Gobind Singh. It was cremated there with due rites. At the place of its cremation stands a gurdwara called Sis Ganj Anandpur.

Next day, a severe duststorm began to blow. A daring Lubana Sikh decided to take advantage of this severe, blinding storm. His name was Lakhi Shah. He decided to take away Guru Tegh Bahadur's headless body during the duststorm. He was successful. He took the headless body to his hut outside the city. He made a heap of firewood inside his hut. He placed the Guru's body on that heap of firewood. He covered it with more firewood. Then he set fire to his hut. He made it known that his hut had caught fire by accident. Thus the Guru's body was cremated by Lakhi Shah. A grand gurdwara stands at the place. It is called Rakab Ganj.

